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THE VISIT TO TIMOR - THE FEAR OF THE INDONESIAN GENERALS RENDERED IT IMPOSSIBLE

by

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1 - THE AMERICAN INCOHERENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The visit of the Portuguese Parlamentary Delegation to Timor was of extreme importance to show all the world the dramatic violation of the Timorese people's rights and also their determination to free themselves from the the Indonesian invader. It would also be the reunion of this tormented people with an almost mythical Portugal, once the administering power, whose return is so deeply wanted to put an end to all those tears and blood that Timorese have been living with for those long sixteen years, crushed by the Javanese empire.

Therefore it is no wonder, their enormous frustation when the visit seltled for the last 3rd November was cancelled. And naturally they can not understand how Portugal could risk such an important and promising mission, just because of the Indonesian veto to a journalist. A lot of people, out of East Timor, do neither understand nor accept the Portuguese attitude either.

But is this the real reason for the refusal? Ali Alatas said that both the USA and Australia opposed to the visit and had suggested the Indonesian government to raise some obstacles in order to turn it impossible.

The Indonesian minister is a liar, but not always. An although the USA's answer belied Ali Alatas, it actually clarifies the American position against the visit.

As a matter of fact the diplomatic not recently delivered by the American embassy to the Portuguese Government asserts that the USA approve the dialogue but do not believe that the direct intervention of UN is useful. And further, Portugal and Indonesia should decide about the subject by themselves, as if the invasion and occupation of a foreign territory by a neighbour state, together with the genocide of a people, was nothing but a bilateral question and not an international affair and in the scope of the UN.

The parliamentary visit to East Timor had been sponsered by the General Secretary according to the terms of the commission confered on him by the General Assembly of the UN, through its resolution 37/30 on 23/11/1982, and obviously it only made sense in that context.

When the American try to keep the UN out of this process, they are not only saying that they do not want that visit, but also juggling their own incoherence of fake supporters of small peoples and states, against their powerful neighbours, as they proclaimed about the invasion in Kuwait.

It seems that for the USA the UN is but a tool for their foreign policy. And it is very bad that the desirable downfall of the eastern communist regimes - putting an end to a bipartite world - had turned the General Secretary of the UN into a hostage of Washington.

Now we can understand the reason why the safety of the delegation and, above all, of the Timorese themselves before, during and after the visit was not assumed by the UN. Now we can explain the untenable silence of the General secretary before the Indonesian disrespect for the established agreements ...

The Indonesian generals and the American administration thought that the lack of protection and the Indonesian terror campaigns would be enough to prevent the Timorese from demonstrating and make the visit a *"sucess"* for the Indonesians.

In such case the americans would suit that the visit took place and that it would be *"successful"*.

But the Timorese were determined to pay with their lives, if necessary, to let the world know their cries of pain and rebellion and their untamed will. So this had to be avoided, as it would compromise the American interests and would also reveal their incoherence to the world.

As the absence of the UN observers hadn't been enough - in spite of the understandable letter written by bishop D. Ximenes Belo diverting from the visit due to that essential gap in the agreement established in New York under the auspices of the UN General Secretary - it mattered to raise other obstacles to the visit. Hence, at the last minute, the Indonesians thought of vetoing three journalists.

The difensible Portuguese intransigence made them think that three vetos was too much. One was enough to make the visit impossible, so they stepped back.

But had Portugal agreed and other obstacles would have been invented by the Indonesians. Only the UN General Secretary could prevent from such foul play ... if the Americans supported him!

The visit to Timor did not take place because the Indonesian generals do not control the situation and were scared and so both Americans and Australians did not want it.

Portugal should not give up the idea of a future visit, however difficult it may be, as long as the USA do not really support it.

If today terror and death exist in Timor and neither blue helmets nor UN observers are there to hinder this situation, it is because the USA do not want them to be there and also because the General Secretary bent to the *"Lords of the World's"* will.

The importance of Timor issue - similar to the invasion in Kuwait - but even more serious in terms of genocide - and the situation of terror in which people are living there now, claim for a meeting of the Security Council of UN. Portugal should request for it. And if our American *"allies"* have the slightest coherence and can see beyond their present interests, they should support it.

2 - WHICH IS THE ATTITUDE OF VATICAN?

It has been published that one of latest letters of the bishop D. Ximenes Belo would have been delivered to the President of the Assembly of Republic by the Patriarch of Lisbon. Curiously, this was the letter in which D. Ximenes Belo diverted from the visit, since the presence of the UN observers was not assured. It is noteworthy that those were the observers the Americans considered should not be involved in this process ...

It is a very curious coincidence that such a letter was delivered by the most important member of the Portuguese Catholic Church. Has it anything to do with the attitude of Vatican?

It was also said that Xanana Gusmão was considering to *"yield up"* to the parliamentary delegation.

Although we could accept the transference to Portugal of their charismatic leader as one of the resistance's strategies, we can not help remembering the similar proposals the Vatican made to Xanana Gusmão through its nunciature in Jakarta and even through D. Ximenes Belo himself.

Therefore we have to ask: Xanana Gusmão ever considered to yield up (and then it mattered to know why) or was it somebody else's idea? Did somebody else want him to have such a plan?

When it was known that the visit would not take place (at least at the scheduled date), the Indonesian soldiers didn't hesitate to attack churchers and to kill even inside them. Theirs is a very clear goal - to raise more insecurity to Timorese people, making them believe that neither Portugal nor even the Timorese Church, can defend them.

Up to this time neither the Vatican nor the Portuguese Church have manifested themselves. Will they do it, pulling the Universal Church with them? Or will they keep silence once again?

And how will they react if Indonesia - which is most likely - tries to make the remaining Timorese priests, trusted by the people, leave Timor? Will the Vatican betray, once again, the East Timorese? Will the Portuguese bishops keep Timor aside, as it has already been done by one of them in the celebrations of the V Centuries of Evangelization and the Meeting of Cultures?

Actions speak louder than words.

Let us hope that this time the voice of conscience may speak louder.

3 - THE PORTUGUESE INDECISION AND INCOPETENCE

The trauma Timorese people are suffering now is mostly due to their isolation from the world as well as to the fact that Portugal did not make any clear sign os solidariaty, not even a message clarifying it's attitude.

Groups of solidarity, other institutions and personalities have been telling the Portuguese Republic powers that they should develop communication channels between Portugal and Timor. Unhappily, the government's answer has been too feeble, and there was not even a mere radio program broadcasted to Timor.

We have been stressing the importance of other alternatives to this visit for years, as we have always thought that it could be rendered impossible.

Unhappily things have happened as if Portugal was caught in surprise and unarmed, without alternatives.

Meanwhile a lot of other initiatives have been blockaded. Not only those the Eventual Commission of the Assembly of Republic had in its sucessive programs like an International

Meeting of M.Ps., a White Book on Violation of Human Rights in East Timor, a video film and other divulgation materials, must of which were systematically delayed by a superior decision ...

Besides there were other initiatives from others which could have internationalized the problem, and this would have give Portugal more chances to react.

It is enough the example of a brochure written about the II Seminar on East Timor of the Oporto University. The Rector of the University intendend to divulge it in universities all over the world. Having historical introduction to the problem and to its international context, and resumés of the communications, it was translated to French and to English half an year ago. The Eventual Commission of the Assembly of Republic, with representatives of all the parties in it, approved twice its publication by the Parliament. But up to this moment the President of the ceasing Assembly has always found excuses not to have it published!...

4 - DESPITE ALL THE DECEPTIONS THE PROJECTED VISIT WAS FRUITFFUL

About ten days before the (temporary?) cancellation of this visit, in an interview to RTP 1 afternoon news, we asserted that if the visit would not take place, its preparations had already allowed us to draw the most interesting conclusions.

The mobilization to East Timor of tens of thousands of Indonesian soldiers and secret agents; the continuous frightening campaigns, including threats to death of Timorese who would contact the Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation, the digging of ditches to bury those who would be punished with death after the visit, the imprisonment and the disappearence of Timorese who could speak Portuguese, the interdiction to news agencies to use their own equipment to broadcast news and images abroad; all this was more than enough to show the dictatorial and even criminal character of the Indonesian regime.

Together with all this, the program for the visit, imposed by Indonesia, did not give any chance for a contact between the Timorese and the delegation. Actually the delegation was too busy with several comings and goings in Indonesian transports with *"strict security"* and all the time to be spent in a lot of official visits. Everything reveals the Indonesian intention and concern with preventing the Timorese from welcoming the Portuguese delegation, as they certainly would.

And there is a lot of evidence that the Timorese would show the world all their repudition for the integration, as well as their determined wish for the Indonesian withdrawal and for the restoration of the Portuguese administration in the territory. We just have to understand the meaning of the restrictions imposed by Indonesia and the testimonies in several letters and messages then received. Let us hope that the Portuguese authorities will make capital out of all this.

Furthermore, the Indonesian boycott to the visit clearly showed the weakness of their regime and their internal divisions.

Between the polititian's approval and the general's disapproval for the visit, the latter won. This is not a sign of strength, but of weakness of the Indonesian regime, specially of their *"falcons"*.

This proves conclusively that even an unprecedented mobilization to East Timor of tens of thousands of Indonesian soldiers and secret agents, was not enough to give Indonesia the control of the situation.

After all these sixteen years of a brutal occupation, supported by the USA and by half of the world, this is an humilliating defeat for the Indonesian Generals.

We were right in an interview to RTP 1 on 16 October when we said that the Indonesians were revealing their scare facing a possible visit.

Unhappily for the Timorese as well as for the Indonesian population, the American administration has not decided yet that it is about time to democratize Jakarta regime.

Let us hope that the time for it will not come too late, because it is not impossible it may happen in Indonesia something similar to what happened in Iran and Iraq.

When Shah Reza Pahlavi, from Persia was deposed (in 1979) to be substituted by the most radical amoung the islamic regimes, he was the most occidentalized leader in the region.

Thus, it was Saddam Hussein, who became the layest leader of an islamic country. Therefore he was supported and armed by the Occident - till he invaded Kuwait ...

Now Suharto is the leader of the one only non-islamic government of a mostly Mohammedan country (more than 80% of its population) and which happens to be the most populated and mainly Mohammedan country in the world!

Only by a timely democratization can the islamization of the Indonesian state be avoided.

But when the Occident, led by Washington and Rome, supports the biggest crimes of this regime, including the genocide of the Maubere people, and becomes the image of the same corruption and lack of values, the pretended moral reaction of radical islamism is, for many, the sole way to salvation.

We hope that with the incoherence and lack of ethics shown by Washington and Vatican - about Timor dramatic situation - these two bastions of the Occident are not giving change to another *"holly war"*, with the most terrible consequences.

If that happened, we would have to cry not only for the dead Timorese, but also for Indonesian Christian martyrs, burnt in that fake purifying fire.

Without respecting the Timorese rights, there will not be a democracy in Indonesia. And without democracy, everything is possible.

The Indonesian boycott to the visit clearly shows that Suharto's regime is fragile and its leadership divided. If the Timorese resistance can keep serene, if Vatican is firm enough, if Portugal can take advantage of the known data gathered during all the preparation for the visit, then things may get much better.

It is up to the Americans the choice between the transition to democracy and Indonesian ruin.

Generally, lucidity decreases as power increases ... specialy if those who are lucid can't advise those who are powerful.

To put an end to all this dramatic situation in Timor and solve the Indonesian problems of its regime, what we need are polititians with a human dimension on politics.

Because those who think as a foreman serving only the strongest for safe success will only lead to a catastroph.

Even without any visit, this was quite a step. And in spite of the military resistance weakness, it was a victory for the timorese. Their courage could scare the Indonesians so much that these were afraid of the visit and gave it up, despite all that unprecedented mobilization.

If there was not any visit at all, it was because Indonesia was afraid of it. The Indonesian brutality and the Timorese generous courage, will be answered. Not as fast as we wished, but the revolt against the continuous Indonesian oppression to Timorese people is spreading all over the world and will have its results.

If the parliamentary visit had taken place, the victory of the Timorese courage would have become clearer to all the world.

Neverthless it was a victory.